

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 1 and 3. These sheets, which include FIGS. 1 and 3, replace the original sheets including FIGS. 1 and 3.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-75 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. In the latest Office Action, claims 1-75 were rejected. With this amendment, claims 1, 16, 17, 23, 38, and 69 are amended. On the basis of the following remarks, consideration of this application and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

Claims 1, 2, 7-10, 12-14, 17-21, 23, 24, 29-32, 34-36, 39-43, 45-47, 52-61, 66, 68-71, and 75 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,070,142 to McDonough. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The claimed invention is directed at automating the servicing of customers at service locations. For example, claim 1 recites a system that selects a primary service attendant to provide service for a customer at a service location. The system then communicates a message to the selected primary service attendant, where "the message indicat[es] the service location at which the event is to be serviced." The selected service attendant receives this message, for example using a message receiver, after which the service attendant knows what event needs to be serviced where in the business establishment. This allows the selected service attendant (who may be anywhere in the business establishment) to go to the patron and provide customer service to the patron *at the service location* identified in the message. In this way, as events occur in various service locations throughout a business establishment, service attendants can be efficiently dispatched according to a set of business rules to deal with the customers' needs as they arise.

The claimed invention thus improves the customer service experience over conventional service approaches. For example, in a casino environment, the claimed invention enables a system that would more efficiently service a customer who wins a jackpot at a slot machine.

Presently, when a patron wins a jackpot, the associated slot machine produces visual and/or audible cues to indicate that the customer needs service — in this case, that the jackpot be paid out to the customer. Given the amount of activity on a casino floor, this method of identifying customers in need of service can be unreliable, haphazard, slow, and unsatisfactory to the customers, who may sit for many minutes waiting for a service attendant while unable to continue playing. It can be appreciated that similar problems exist for providing service to patrons in other environments, where the servicing is to be provided at various locations distributed throughout the business establishment. The claimed invention improves the customer service experience by selecting a service attendant to service the event and then communicating to the selected service attendant a message that indicates at which service location in the business establishment the service is to be provided.

In contrast, McDonough merely describes a virtual call center. Whereas the claimed invention provides services to customers distributed throughout a business establishment, McDonough simply answers customers' phone calls from a remote call center. McDonough's customer service exists in a virtual environment, where services are not tied to particular locations at which the services are to be provided. Rather, the services provided in McDonough are provided via phone calls with customers who can be at any arbitrary location. This is a key distinction, as McDonough's customers are not at specific service locations to which services attendants must be dispatched to provide service to customers at those locations. McDonough thus does not face the problem of providing services to locations distributed throughout a business establishment.

Because of this difference, McDonough does not send "message[s] indicating the service location at which the event is to be serviced," as claimed. In McDonough's virtual system, in

fact, such information would be irrelevant. McDonough's employees do not need to know from where their customers are calling, and even if they did know they would not have to service the customer at that location. Indeed, tying service to the customer's location would contradict a fundamental purpose of McDonough's *virtual* call center. As explained in McDonough's Abstract, McDonough provides service via "a customer access resource through *any* access method at *any* time from *any* customer location." Therefore, McDonough's system does not send the claimed messages to service providers that indicate where the service is to be provided.

As the examiner noted, McDonough does mention that a customer may optionally contact the call center through additional remote communication means (such as a fax server, a web server, an e-mail server, a PC direct server, or a kiosk). But regardless of the contact method, McDonough's system still merely routes the customer's call to a remote employee. The locations that the Office Action cites in McDonough are not service locations at which the events are to be serviced. The call center employees interact with customers over the phone lines; they do not go to the service location. Therefore, McDonough does not disclose anywhere the claimed messages indicating the service location at which the event is to be serviced, and in any event such a feature would be impossible for a call center.

Claims 1, 2, 7-10, 12-14, 17-21, 23, 24, 29-32, 34-36, 39-43, 45-47, 52-61, 66, 68-71, and 75 are therefore novel over McDonough because they recite limitations not disclosed either expressly or inherently in that reference.

Claims 3-6, 11, 22, 25-28, 33, 44, 48-51, 62-65, 67, 72, and 73 were rejected as made obvious by McDonough in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,257,981 to Acres. Each of these claims depends, directly or indirectly, from one of the independent claims discussed above and therefore includes each of the limitations that distinguish the claimed limitations from McDonough. In the

Office Action, Acres was cited for its disclosure of only the dependent limitations in these claims, such as the various measures of customer value and scheduling rules. Importantly, the addition of Acres to McDonough does not cure the primary deficiencies in McDonough discussed above. Accordingly, claims 3-6, 11, 22, 25-28, 33, 44, 48-51, 62-65, 67, 72, and 73 are patentable over the suggested combination of McDonough and Acres.

Claims 15, 16, 37, 38, and 74 were rejected as made obvious by McDonough in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,003,013 to Boushy. Each of these claims depends, directly or indirectly, from one of the independent claims discussed above and therefore includes each of the limitations that distinguish the claimed limitations from McDonough. In the Office Action, Boushy was cited for its disclosure of only the dependent limitations in these claims, such as the gaming and slot machines and gaming machine management system. Importantly, the addition of Boushy to McDonough does not cure the primary deficiencies in McDonough discussed above. Accordingly, claims 15, 16, 37, 38, and 74 are patentable over the suggested combination of McDonough and Boushy.

Lastly, Applicants note that the previous Office Action did not acknowledge the two most recent Information Disclosure Statements submitted for this application. As indicated the IFW system accessed via PAIR, these Information Disclosure Statements, were filed on February 27, 2004 and April 2, 2004, were received by the Patent Office on February 27, 2004 and April 6, 2004, and were subsequently received by the 3600 unit on March 8, 2004 and April 13, 2004, respectively. Because these Information Disclosure Statements were filed in accordance with Rules 97 and 98, Applicants respectfully request that the examiner consider the references cited therein and indicate the same by initialing the corresponding PTO/SB/08A forms included therewith.

Based on the foregoing, the application is in condition for allowance of all claims, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the examiner believes for any reason direct contact would help advance the prosecution of this case to allowance, the examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 2, 2005

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